WOMEN VETERANS HISTORICAL PROJECT

ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

INTERVIEWEE: Karen L. Chin

INTERVIEWER: Beth Ann Koelsch

DATE: 8 August 2023

[THIS TRANSCRIPT HAS BEEN EDITED BY THE INTERVIEWEE]

[Begin Interview]

BAK: All right, we're recording. So, thank you for doing this. And this is the official beginning. I always have to look.

So, today is Tuesday, August 8th, 2023. My name is Beth Ann Koelsch, I'm here at the home of Karen L. Chin in Graham, North Carolina to conduct an oral history interview for the Women Veterans Historical Project at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro. Karen, if you would state your name the way you would like it to be read on your collection.

KC: Karen L. Chin.

BAK: Great. Can you tell me your birthdate, where you were born?

KC: Thirty September 1945. Born in Warren, Ohio.

BAK: Okay. And can you tell me a little about your family? What your parents did?

KC: I was the oldest of three and spent all growing up time in Ohio. Mom worked off and on. Dad was an electrical engineer, did some wiring for some cars for Packard and GM.

BAK: Did you have Packard cars?

KC: The Packard Museum is still there, and I'll be seeing that day after tomorrow as we go up for my 60th class reunion. So, I graduated from there in 1963 and then spent four years at Kent State University and then spent ten years teaching middle school art and then went into the army.

BAK: Wow! So, this is a very good story. I'm just going to treble check that we actually are going, because that would—Look at us recording. Nice.

KC: Yeah.

BAK: All right.

KC: Yeah, I taught middle school, taught art for ten years and then the school system was growing, they opened up a second junior high, which I was their initial art teacher there. And then, of course, if you are big enough that you, what do you do with these junior high kids that you spent money for a new school? They have to go to high school. So, when they went to build a second high school, I wanted to go there, or the old high school, and they wanted somebody older, and it ticked me off and I was twenty-eight at the time. I thought, "How much older do you have to be?"

BAK: Right.

KC: So, I took a day off from school, dropped my dry cleaning off next to the dry-cleaning building was the army recruiter. And why I went in there, I do not know. I put my dry cleaning over my shoulder and went in and was in a wise ass mood and the guy said, "Hey, we're looking for females, for the officer corps."

I said, "Oh, I'm under contract with the school system." I said, "You find me some old broad who's been in for five years or more and I might talk to you." They did.

BAK: Okay, well this is great.

KC: They did.

BAK: I just wanted to—

KC: So, that's how I got into the army.

BAK: Wow!

KC: It was a direct commission program at Congress's behest because there were not enough women being produced in the officer corps as second lieutenants from ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corps]. They were either getting out of ROTC or getting out of school or getting married. And so this was a three-month basic course that they taught you how to read, write, shoot, and climb walls. And that was about the size of it.

BAK: Wow! Okay.

KC: But everybody had to have at least one degree. So, I went through with people who had ran out of money to be pediatric doctor when they went into the Medical Service Corps. So, a lot of these very talented women, but you had to have at least one bachelor's degree, so.

BAK: Okay. This is great, but before we actually get there, so I'm assuming that art was your favorite subject in high school.

KC: Right.
BAK: Okay. And you graduated in '60—

KC: 1963, yeah.

BAK: Okay. So, yeah, the country was, were you following politics then?

KC: No, not at all.

BAK: Okay.

KC: Not at all.

BAK: So, tell me what Kent State was like pre—

KC: We got blamed for it. The art students got blamed for the Kent State thing.

[The Kent State shootings (also known as the May 4 massacre and the Kent State massacre) resulted in the killing of four and wounding of nine unarmed college students by the Ohio National Guard, on the Kent State University campus. The shootings took place on 4 May 1970, during a rally opposing the expanding involvement of the Vietnam War into Cambodia by United States military forces as well as protesting the National Guard presence on campus.]

BAK: The art students?

KC: Oh, yeah. Hippies, all art students. We weren't, but that was in '63 at Kent at that time. That's who got blamed for it. I know exactly how it happened. I know who did it. I know how it happened.

BAK: Wow!

KC: My sorority sister's dad was a track coach there and we know exactly how it happened.

BAK: Do you want to tell us?

KC: No.

BAK: No, okay. All right. But you had already graduated.

KC: You asked me about politics and that's the answer.

BAK: Okay, fair enough.

KC: Let's just put it this way: it wasn't anybody on campus that we knew at the time.
BAK: Oh, wow! Okay. Okay, but none of this was going on in '67.

KC: By spring of '67, I had secured a job teaching art in Westerville, Ohio.

BAK: And that's what you wanted to do, be an art teacher?

KC: Yeah.

BAK: Okay. Westerville, Ohio, all right. Did you enjoy school?

KC: I did, yeah. Both high school and college, yeah.

BAK: Okay. So, where did you meet Bobby [Chin] in all this? Because sometimes I—

KC: Bobby, I met in Germany.

BAK: Okay. So, we got a while yet.

KC: Yeah.

BAK: Okay. So, you were annoyed at the school system, and you were feeling—

KC: I just made a snap decision. I just made a snap decision, said, "That's it, I'm done. If I can't go to the high school, I just don't think I want to be here anymore."

BAK: Okay. And I guess—

KC: And—

BAK: So,rry.

KC: When I went to get dry cleaning and went next door to the army recruiting office and they mentioned, and I said, "Find me somebody who's been in." They did. I went back and talking to her, I had taught for ten years, and she had been in the army for ten years. I said, "Where?" She said, "Well, I'm getting out." I said, "Wait, time out. You're trying to talk me to go in and you're getting out?" She goes, "No, time out." She said, "I went into the army right out of college." And she said, "I've never been married. I have horses. I like this area. I found a place for my horses and a nice ranch and somebody I want to marry. So, I'm done."

BAK: But she still talked you into—

KC: Yes, she did. So, she said, "Here's the program." And she said, "You have to sign for four years." And I thought, "Oh, I can do that. Standing on my head, no problem." Well, I stayed in for ten, so it was not a problem. But that was the only thing you had to commit

to staying in for a four-year tour at the time.

BAK: And did you know that you would be signing up as an officer?

KC: Yes. In fact, it was a direct commission program. And I was so old that I went into the army as a first lieutenant.

BAK: Wow!

KC: You begin as a second lieutenant. And so there were two of us in the WAC [Women's Army Corps] basic class. In fact, I found that top piece right here. [shows photograph] There were two of us, grandma one and grandma two, they called us. And they did that because of the year group that you were assessed in. We would've been out of kilter age-wise, I'll put it that way. So, Peggy Boson and I were both first lieutenants as we went in.

So, at that point, after basic, which was like July to October, then they sent me off to motor officer school. Well, at graduation, we had to determine which one of the branches we wanted to be permanently assigned to. And of course, combat arms we weren't allowed in, and some combat support, but mostly it was combat service support. So, we could have chosen military intelligence, quartermaster, military police, admin, or transportation, or ordnance.

So, I chose transportation once again as a, "I don't know. I don't want to sit behind a desk. And transportation sounds to me like something is moving."

BAK: Yes, exactly.

KC: But I had no idea I was going to be dealing with trucks. It was fine with me. It was just I was ready for a change.

BAK: That was definitely a change.

KC: And that's what happened, yeah.

BAK: How did your family react?

KC: My mother was very upset that I went into the army after ten years of school teaching. Only bad girls did something like that.

BAK: What kind of bad girls?

KC: Anybody. Whores.

BAK: Whores. Got it.

KC: Anybody who was, there's no other better way to say it, that mom just kind of went, "What?" So, hence forth and forevermore the joke in the family was, well, she probably would've joined the circus if that had come to town.

BAK: [laughs] Wow! What about you? That's very funny. What about—
KC: And actually, that's been my whole life.

BAK: Well, it sounds like it's worked out.

KC: I've always been one, if I make a decision, that's it. It's done. It's happening. If I find out I made the wrong decision, my responsibility, you make your bed and you lie in it.

BAK: Sure. All right. So, you actually joined in, so 19—

KC: It was in June of 1976—

BAK: Okay. How'd your friends react?

KC: Oh, my teaching friends, "Oh, you can't do that. You can't do that." I said, "I'm out of here." [They said,] "You're not really going to do that." [I said,] "Yes, I am." I don't think they've thought that I was serious until they realized that I wasn't around to fill the junior high art teaching position. And I let it be known. Hey, I've been here. I've known all these kids, 180 kids twice a year for ten years. That's a lot of people.

BAK: Right.

KC: That's a lot of people. And I loved it. And they loved me. And it was great.
In fact, I just re-hooked up with, the church that we're going to, one of the ministries that is provided is a home for women to recover from drugs. And it's called the Hosea House in Manteo. And the guy who ran it was one of my students.

BAK: Oh, wow!

KC: One of my seventh-grade art students.

BAK: Wow! Everyone's coming to North Carolina.

KC: Yeah.

BAK: Okay. Well, you joined during, it was the Bicentennial. Was there anything you remember about the—

[The United States Bicentennial was a series of celebrations and observances during the mid-1970s that paid tribute to historical events leading up to the creation of the United States of America as an independent republic. It was a central event in the memory of the American Revolution. The Bicentennial culminated on Sunday, July 4, 1976, with the 200th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence by the Founding Fathers in the Second Continental Congress.]

KC: No, nothing, nothing. I just wanted out of the area in '76. Once again, it was, "That's it. I'm done. I'm done with where I am." And that was the same kind of a mindset I had when my command in 2001 was dissolving and having to go places. And I just went, "That's it, I'm done." So, I left the area and went down to work for [University of] Mount Olive.

BAK: Oh, wow!

KC: As a student support and adjunct professor, which I never really had to do, but. So, once again, it was just a quick decision and just made the best of it and went forward.

So, no, Bicentennial? No, I knew it was going on. I don't remember anything that I was involved with, or community was involved with there in Columbus. I was doing my own thing. I was really not aware of what else was out there.

BAK: Okay, so had you been out of Ohio before you went to Fort McClellan? So, Alabama's very different, I would imagine. And you were there in July or August?

KC: Well, I was, but I was only there from July to October. And we were so busy with 5:00 AM to midnight for three months in basic that rarely did we get out. However, being first and second lieutenants, being officers, we were allowed to have our car. And of course everybody drove to go to basic, so they had their POV [privately owned vehicle]. And generally on the weekends we would end up taking off.

So, I'm kind of with friends. And also the WAC [Women's Army Corps] basic was there, but so was, I don't know if the chemical corps was there, was there at the time, but military police were there. So, there were always guys that we were either dating or running around with that we had met in the area. But you're right. Well, I really don't remember anything being real different about Alabama other than it was hot.

BAK: Did they have air conditioning?

KC: Oh, yeah. It was nice digs. It wasn't anything special, but there were two of us to rooms. It was a nice facility.

BAK: Did you find anything challenging, the physical or schooling or?

KC: No, I knew I was going to have to run two miles. And so before I got down there, I started running. And when I was teaching from '67 to '76, you couldn't wear pants. You're always in dresses. And so I was always in heels. So, I taught in heels for ten years.

BAK: Wow!

KC: So, as a result of that, when I went out to run, I had a hard time running. I had to teach myself to run heel toe instead of running on the balls of your feet. And I knew we would be running in jump boots.

But much beyond that, I didn't know what I was getting myself into. So, I did

train a little bit, but I was certainly not to the point when I left to go in that I could run a full two miles.

BAK: So, how did the PT [physical training] go?

KC: It was great. I didn't have any problem with the PT. They of course are good about ramping it up—

BAK: Okay.

KC: —and of course the long five or six or whatever mile couple of hikes that we went on didn't happen until toward the middle to the last part of basic. So, they did a really good job of prepping us for the things they wanted us to be able to do.

By the time we exited at graduation, they made a big deal about firing the M16 [rifle], and they interviewed every single one of us individually. And I thought, "Well, hell, I thought that was the whole idea that you had to be able to kill somebody if you had to."

BAK: Right. They interviewed you because they thought you were too sensitive?

KC: Well, no, it was just what they did because my class was the first class of women to actually qualify with the M16.

BAK: Oh, wow!

KC: There were two more classes of WACs behind me, and the WAC Corps was done.

BAK: Right.

KC: After that anybody who was female and came into the army, can't speak for the other services, but they came directly into the branch. They didn't go into the Women's Army Corps. And actually it was called Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, kind of officially when it was initially started.

BAK: Right.

KC: So, my class was the first class of women to have to qualify with the M16, not just familiarize, okay, here's the trigger and the bullet comes out here and this is the butt.

BAK: How'd you do with the M16?

KC: I loved it. I had gone hunting with my grandparents and also with my first husband. And I didn't have any problem with it. And I always figured if anybody was bothering me or the people, I was responsible for—

BAK: You'd shoot them.

KC: I'd shoot them.

BAK: Check, keeping it simple. [laughs] You won't have to write the reports [unclear].

KC: Then when our class went in, I was not aware that we would be the first class of women to be responsible for being able to, so we either had to be marksman or expert. I think I just made marksman. Right now at our house I fire, he loads.

BAK: Fire what?

KC: At our house here, I fire he loads. [laughs]

BAK: Okay. How do you spell that? He?

KC: He loads. He loads the ammo. And I'll, I fire.

BAK: Thank you. Yeah, I just don't, don't know. Okay. Interesting.

KC: So, yeah, that was not a big deal. Now, it was interesting when I got to Germany and got assigned in the platoon and then later came back as commander, I never had the opportunity to fire my hand weapon that the commander at that point in time of the company-sized units. And we could never, we rarely if ever got a chance in the five years that I was there to be on the range and for the guys to update their M16 qualification requirements because, excuse me, the Germans ran the ranges.

BAK: Okay.

KC: And so the German units got priority to the ranges. So, we rarely ever got to do that. And as a result of that, I had never had an opportunity to fire my own service weapon. So, if it had come to that, I'd of had to use my M16. [laughs]

BAK: Going big. Go big or go home. So, you mentioned a first husband. Was this—Were you separated or divorced by the time you were?

KC: At the time, when I was married while I was teaching. And then all we did was spend all waking time with family. And everything that happened was always with family. And I just got tired of knowing the whole lifetime the only people I could have dinner with, it was his sister and the parents until they all died.

BAK: Okay.

KC: So, we just went our separate way. So, when I went into the service, I was single. And then when I came back from, when I went into basic, transportation basic, I was dating a guy and he said, "Well," we were upset that we were going to be assigned to two different locations. So, before we left basic, I married and that's how we got to Germany.

And then my current husband, Bobby, actually worked with my second husband and with Tom, and my second husband. There was a lot of friction because we both had command of—The battalion had five companies and my company and his company, my company had the only, our primary mission was hauling nuclear weapons. As a result of that, we generally got better quality soldiers because those soldiers had to have a good enough background to get a security clearance.

BAK: Right.

KC: So, when you're looking, that was always of the five companies in our battalion. "Oh, well, the 89th, they've got the hoity-toities. They've got the good guys." But it was not something I thought about at the time. And I had no idea when I went into that battalion and the five companies, I had no idea that that's where some of the rivalry, and it wasn't bad. It wasn't vindictive. It was just like one service would make fun of another service.

BAK: Right.

KC: Oh, well. The navy would say, "Oh, well army guys can't swim." That kind of thing. And the same way with the air force, they don't do PT, they just fly planes.

BAK: The chair force, right.

KC: So, it was not that. But there was a lot of competition for the three companies. We had three companies that were actually on post and two companies that were in another post. And when I say post, it was really an old time, World War II. There had been a German unit on that facility.

BAK: Okay, wow!

KC: So, that's where they put the 65,000 Americans who were there in Kaiserslautern. It was the biggest concentration of Americans outside of the United States at that point in time. During that four or five years that I was there from end '78 to about '81.

During that time period, the presence for, certainly the army, I don't know. And of course the air force had a lot there because they were at Ramstein. Ramstein has now been made into an international airport. And of course Landstuhl was there. So, that meant anybody who was getting the shot hell out of them would get moved from Afghanistan, wherever, to Landstuhl because Ramstein was right there with the aircraft.

So, there was a big contingent of air force. So, we had Ramstein on one end of where we were and Sembach that had the A-10s, the hogs on the other end of around where we were there in Kaiserslautern.

[The Fairchild Republic A-10 Thunderbolt II is a single-seat, twin-turbofan, straight-wing, subsonic attack aircraft developed by Fairchild Republic for the United States Air Force (USAF). In service since 1976, it is named for the Republic P-47 Thunderbolt, but is commonly referred to as the "Warthog" or simply "Hog".]

As a result of that, my second husband was pretty much in competition with my company, and I never realized that. I just did my thing and worked with my drivers and mechanics and truck master, and I didn't realize that there had been, when you come in, you come into history, you happen to be there for a short period of time, but on that continuum, you may not, you're somewhere along the beginning and end. And so I didn't realize that his 66th Trans Company generally, and they did general cargo and mail. What that group of five companies did was simply we got all the beans and bullets to the PXs [post exchange; on-base retail store] and the BXs [base exchange] and the ammo dumps and all the places across US Army Europe where they had pre-positioned troops. And all those troops needed to be able to go to the commissary and pick up food, PX for all the other goods and also for the base exchange. So, the transportation world that I had found myself in was all trucks. And trucks delivered to any place that did that kind of a mission.

BAK: Okay, now I can't remember. Do officers do AIT?

[Advanced Individual Training (AIT) is where enlisted soldiers go after basic/boot camp to learn the skills for their MOS (Military Occupational Specialty/ job).]

KC: We did, yeah. Officers, the AIT would be the same as basic training. So, transportation officer basic was at Fort Eustis, Virginia.

BAK; Okay.

KC: So, after that, then I went to Germany, and when I came back from Germany, I took the advanced course. Generally when somebody takes command, they've already had the advanced course.

BAK: Got it.

KC: My world has never been quite the way to be expected, as you can tell.

BAK: Yes.

KC: And sometimes I don't realize it until I go to tell somebody this.

When I went over to Germany, I was assigned as third platoon leader. And there were three platoons and a maintenance platoon that took care of the trucks. And then when I made captain, they can't have two captains in a company—

BAK: Okay.

KC: —so they moved me to battalion headquarters. Remember I said there were already three units on post and the headquarters was there with the other two companies elsewhere.

So, I was put in charge of headquarters and headquarters detachment company,

which meant it was the battalion staff—

BAK: Right.

KC: —and the full colonel was under my command.

BAK: No, really?

KC: Way, yes.

BAK: What?

KC: All the staff officers who were majors and all outranked me had to answer to me at headquarters because they said, "Well, what are you going to do when you have to tell the colonel he has to come out, take PT with us?" I said, "I'm going to go tell him he has to come out for PT."

BAK: Wow!

KC: And so we did that, and it was fine. I did not seek that out. It was—I was promoted to captain and then they moved me to battalion headquarters. And then when the captain in my old company was time for him to rotate out. I had no idea. I was just doing my little first lieutenant thing. I had no idea that behind the scenes they were thinking about Karen taking over the 89th. And I wasn't going to ask for a company command. I didn't know what the hell I was doing when I went in there. And all of the guys in the company knew.

When they saw first lieutenant, they thought, "She's been around a while." I said, "No, I came from a direct commission." Told them the story that I just told you. I said, "So, here's the deal. I'm going to make you look good and you're going to make me look good. And we're going to do that because I'm going to ask dumb questions and you're going to tell me you can't do that.

BAK: Right.

KC: Or you're going to tell me no, there's a better way. Now you're not going to tell me that's the way we've always done it, because that's a sign of a dying outfit in my opinion. We aren't going to go rogue or anything, but I'm going to rely on you to make sure I don't look like an idiot because you don't need a female idiot running your platoon or overseeing your platoon."

BAK: Was it pretty much all guys?

KC: Oh, yeah. They were all guys. I did have out of a company of 150, we had two or three, no, we had no female drivers. But we did have probably three or four at the most female maintenance mechanics.

BAK: In your training, did you have to learn to do maintenance or?

KC: Yeah, after I left the basic course and Tom and I went to Germany, before I did that, I went to Fort Knox for the motor officer basic course. And there were two of us, two females in that class. It was—We were working on magneto engines, we worked on the M60 tank and the M60A1 and the M88 wrecker and various different models of wheeled vehicles.

We had International Harvester 2000 Ds initially, so we worked on those, and we worked on two and a half tons and that kind of thing. And that was—Time at Fort Knox was, that was a good maintenance course. It was the Army Maintenance Officer course. So, yeah, I had that. But then when I went to Germany, I didn't know what I was going to get into at that point.

And you'll see the pictures there, this is an International Harvester 2000 D. Now the big square front M915s that you see going down the highway. Now I was, once again, I'm either in the first or the last that I'm a Libra. Either I'm on the first end of it or the tail end. I was the tail end of the WAC Corps, first female officer, tail end of when they got rid of these things, [shows photographs] my soldiers would drive one of these up to Frankfurt and drive back in the new M15s because we were the only company in the army at the time who was daily, daily, daily moving things via military truck.

BAK: Wow!

KC: That's not to say other units didn't have trucks—

BAK: Right.

KC: —but they were not using that particular [vehicle—KC corrected later] on a daily basis.

BAK: So, you knew how to fix them by the time you were—

KC: Well, no, I didn't know how to fix them, fix them, but I knew my way around.

BAK: Okay.

KC: I wouldn't have been totally out in the cold talking to the mechanics or the truck master.

BAK: Right, you knew some—

KC: And then when the new truck came in, none of us knew how it worked. Oddly enough, in talking to my dad, he was the one who proposed General Motors to pick up this contract for new trucks to replace these aging International Harvester vehicles. And that proposal was supposed to be a single manufacturer. And it turned out to be somebody had the Cummins engine, somebody else had the hydraulic system, another person had the brake system, somebody else had the electrics.

And so when you have a mishmash, you may or may not have a better product. Fortunately it turned out that they had a pretty good product. But in order to ensure this got kicked off and put into the system well, our unit, our 89th Trans Company was assigned a maintenance crew for about a month and a half. They weren't living in our

barracks, but they were in town, and they worked with our truck master, driver and mechanics to service these things because that meant all new parts.

That meant getting all new sources for, of course, sources of course were provided once the contract was, "Yeah, we'll provide you all electrical workings." Then of course there was your source for repair, but when it never existed anywhere. So, I was on the beginning of that, so that was really interesting time.

BAK: Yeah, when were you told, you were going to Germany, did you know you were going to be doing that?

KC: When Tom and I got married, he was in the advanced course. You asked was there an AIT and the answer is yes, basic. And then you come back for a follow-on advanced course. Once that's done, you go off to command and general staff and some of the senior level. So, up through lieutenant to major, you really only have two: basic and advanced. And then whatever else, a commander's course or maintenance course, and military police, of course each branch would have their branch service-related missions. You'd end up going to schools to augment either what was new or what needed to be passed on to the people in those particular environments. So, yeah. What was your question again?

BAK: When did you find out you were going to be assigned to Germany?

KC: When Tom and I, he was finishing advanced course. I was finishing the basic course. We were married. Okay, so now where we're going to go? Well, they sent us both to Germany and I understood why, because there was plenty of room for a major, actually for a captain and a lieutenant because they were transporting. We had—There were five companies in our battalion. There was a second battalion with five companies, I think there was a third battalion. So, there had been plenty of places to put transportation officers.

BAK: So, how did Tom feel about you outranking him?

KC: I didn't outrank him. He was a senior captain. I was a lieutenant.

BAK: Oh, senior captain, okay. Lieutenant, okay.

KC: Yeah. He was at the advanced course. So, in fact, I think he was a captain, I was a lieutenant at the time.

BAK: Did you live on the economy or?

KC: We did. We lived on the economy.

BAK: Did you like Germany? How did you feel?

KC: I did—I did like Germany. The only bad thing I remember was at the time we were there, at least in the house when we were at above your sink, where you would wash your

dishes in your kitchen was a container that was about this big. [gesturing with her hands] And you would fill it with water. So,mehow it would fill with water, and it would heat. When it was gone, that was it. You had no hot water.

BAK: How long did it take to replenish?

KC: A long time.

BAK: A long time. Okay.

KC: So, I never showered at the house. I always would shower on post. So, I would wait. And you couldn't, I mean the water was really, really cold. And that's one thing I came back—I went into the army with cold, damaged hands and feet.

BAK: Oh, wow!

KC: But I didn't know. From growing up in northeastern Ohio where it snowed all the time, and you just went. And then when Germany was always cold, Germany was freezing cold. I had sometimes two sets of underwear on, two socks, of course, fatigue pants and a bra, and sometimes two T-shirts, my fatigue shirt and my field jacket that had a lining in it.

BAK: So, you worked outside mostly?

KC: I was outside in the motor pool most of the time. Of course, at my desk and in my little office for office work going over policies and stuff that was going on with the company, that kind of thing. So, yeah, I think I was probably half and half, and hours were generally 6:00 AM to 6:00, 7:00, 8:00, 9:00 PM.

BAK: Wow! How many days a week?

KC: Eight days a week.

BAK: Wow! That's a lot.

KC: I loved it. [laughs]

BAK: Okay. And did you learn to speak German or most people speak—

KC: No, I learned enough German to get myself in trouble.

BAK: Okay.

KC: Enough to get to the Bahnhof [railroad station] and find my way around and order something. Now what was interesting was I could read any German, the guys would give me something to read, and I was taught to read phonetically. Most of my soldiers, not

most, a lot of my soldiers, I was shocked, couldn't read. I mean, they could, but they couldn't. They learned recognition. C-A-T means cat. I learned C-A-T, cat. So, I could read any German they put in front of me, and they said, "Ma'am, how can you say all these German time names?" I said, "Well, it's right here." That's when I realized that I was glad and fortunate to have been educated when you learned phonetically how to read. That was interesting. And the one thing that our platoon sergeants had a hard time with was some of these guys had come directly from wherever, high school most of the time, and they would get a checkbook and they thought, as long as I have paper in that checkbook, I have money.

BAK: Really?

KC: Yes, ma'am.

BAK: Wow!

KC: So, our platoon sergeants and first sergeant had to teach these guys, if you have a hundred dollars and you write a cheque for five, you have ninety-five left and on and on and on. So, there was some really interesting times with regard to what you would consider basic skills.

BAK: Right.

KC: And when you gather a company of 150 people who've come from various different backgrounds. And I didn't really have any fights. In fact, I had no fights in my company. Other companies had fights, but the only fights that happened and discontent in the company was over music.

BAK: But fist fights?

KC: The country, you like country music, oh, you're crap.

BAK: Right.

KC: And pop music. And of course, the whole time we were over there, there was no TV. I mean there was, but it was all in German.

BAK: Right.

KC: So, the American AFN didn't happen until about the time, let's see, probably '80. AFN was finally beginning to get a little bit of radio. There was still no TV. I mean, we were watching all German TV. So, it wasn't anything I bothered to do because I didn't have a TV, and why would I?

[The American Forces Network (AFN) is a government television and radio broadcast

service the United States military provides to those stationed or assigned overseas. Headquartered at Fort George G. Meade, Maryland, AFN's broadcast operations, which include global radio and television satellite feeds, emanate from the AFN Broadcast Center/Defense Media Center in Riverside, California. AFN was founded on 26 May 1942, in London as the Armed Forces Radio Service (AFRS)].

BAK: Right, right.

KC: I didn't know what was going on. And I was too busy with army stuff to certainly learn any German.

BAK: Now when you say fights—

KC: The fights, fist fights.

BAK: Really?

KC: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

BAK: What was on the radio?

KC: Yeah. The country music guys versus the rock guys. And I said they wanted to bait me, which is your, what do you listen to?

BAK: Really?

KC: Oh, yes!

BAK: Wow!

KC: Oh, yeah, they wanted to bait me. I said, "I listen to stuff you've never even heard of." And of course, the whole time I was growing up, I played piano. So, what did I learn?

BAK: Right, classical.

KC: Bach, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky [classical music composers] and all of that stuff. So, I named off names and they looked at me like what? I said, "Well, I told you."

BAK: Now were these mostly white soldiers?

KC: Yeah, I would say it was probably four to one ratio. But we had absolutely no racial, absolutely no racial tension in our company.

BAK: Just music. I like that.

KC: And it was really pretty much that way in the battalion. So,me of our best drivers were black.

BAK: Now you being a woman in mostly a—and you're outranking some of the—How did the subordinates and the people who were higher ranking but were subordinates do?

KC: I can only tell you that respect is earned.

BAK: Right, okay.

KC: And when I took command, the first sergeant, I don't remember if we had changed first sergeants or not, but when I took command and handed him the guide on, he went to let go. And I grabbed his hands and said, "Can you train one more dumb captain, and a female one at that?" And he just kind of stood back and didn't know if he wanted to laugh or cry.

I said, "You know I'll support you" and I let go. And he said, "Yes, ma'am." And it was on from that. And after that, he knew if he needed me, a couple times he said, "Ma'am, I'm going to bring specialist so-and-so in, and I need for you to read him the riot act." And here's why. And here's what he did and here's how I'm going to deal with him. And sometimes when they went through their squad leader and their platoon sergeant and then the first sergeant, sometimes they needed to come to the captain. But it was my first sergeant explained to him what was going on. I had really, really good platoon sergeants the whole time I was there.

So, they would tell me what was going on. We're having trouble with this or we're having trouble with that. And I would say, what do you recommend? You've been here, you know what a good way to work. Do we keep them off of runs and only allow them to do local runs? Because the guys knew if they could get a load nearby, they might drive to Munich. And if they could get their truck loaded again, they could go from there to another part in Germany and get loaded. They could be gone for a week. And the guys knew if we can be gone, if we're not back at four, we don't have to do PT.

BAK: Right, okay.

KC: So, there were some of the guys who really worked the system, and they could be gone two weeks.

BAK: It's impressive. So, what'd you do with them?

KC: Well, that was on the platoon sergeant with their recommendation. "Ma'am, I'm only going to let him take these runs " I said, "Hey, that works." And we could read their tachometers. So, we knew where they were. And the guys would generally call in. And sometimes the guys would not be able to get loaded. They had a log order to go to point A and they were there at point A, and they had to wait with three or four German trucks to be loaded before they got to them, so they couldn't make it back. They were at a place where they couldn't get back before X amount. And generally the motor pool did run twenty-four hours, but not really. I mean, they tried to keep the guys off the road at night.

So, pretty much over there, once the sun went down, wherever the truck was, those guys were going to be remaining overnight. So,, that was really interesting.

When I say German trucks, one of our battalions, we had the three truck battalions, five company, five company, five company. There was also a civilian labor group battalion that had five companies. They were made out of German civilian drivers. They weren't really military; they were German civilian drivers. And I'll say it. They had uniforms, but they could be 350 pounds if they wanted to. They could stop and drink beer all day long if they wanted to, they could stop for lunch, and they didn't have to have a haircut. So, if they got shaggy, it was no big deal. So, some of those trucks might have been loaded either through preference or maybe, and we only got one side of the story, I can't get loaded, so I can't come back. Right. [laughs] So, you mean you weren't there to judge that. All you could do was dealt with them once they quote, returned to station.

But the civilian labor group was how our soldiers learned to find their way around in Germany. 1976 to 1981, when I had command for '81, or, well, it was before that because I came back to the advanced course in '81. But during that time, maps, there was no GPS. There was no cell phones. And even landlines, you may or may not be able to have gotten a connection. So, in order to teach these guys, and each battalion and company had, it wasn't set in stone, but they had a general, it's just like your postman, your postmen have a certain route that they take.

[The Global Positioning System (GPS), originally Navistar GPS, is a satellite-based radio navigation system owned by the United States government and operated by the United States Space Force. It is one of the global navigation satellite systems (GNSS) that provides geolocation and time information to a GPS receiver anywhere on or near the Earth where there is an unobstructed line of sight to four or more GPS satellites.]

BAK: Right.

KC: It was the same way with our company. We had a certain area that we pretty much managed. Now, of course, when one of the other companies went down on a training holiday, we covered for them and vice versa. So, just like your mailman here would do, almost exactly the same thing. So, in order for our guys to learn literally how to drive and where to drive, well actually they came to us knowing how to drive and how to deal with the truck, but not where they were going and how they needed to get there. And it was important because those trucks did not fit under a bridge made in the 1300s.

BAK: Right.

KC: And if you damaged the bridge or ran over a farmer's chickens, the United States government was paying for that bridge and the farmer's chickens for the rest of [the chickens' lives—KC clarified later] life. So, these civilian labor groups are guys, when they first got in the country, got assigned to a civilian labor driver, maybe sometimes they got assigned to one the whole time they needed the training. So,metimes of course they would change.

And those guys, the battalion labor guys showed our drivers best routes to take on the routes, which were pretty much the routes that our three companies in that battalion were supporting. So, when our guys went to run solo on their vehicle, between their maps and what they had learned, they were generally pretty good. And they were really good about, oh, they're doing work on this road and finding another route around which they just didn't have GPS and they were out there by themselves.

BAK: Right.

KC: And they had a load. Additionally, they were all told you do not have to pull the load. If you check it, you know it's not secure and you can't get help.

They knew to call back the truck master and then truck master would go to our battalion headquarters, which would go to group. And so there were ways to get around that. And in fact, not long after I got back, we lost one of our drivers. He was okay but the load in front of him, which was not driven by a military truck, had pipes and came back and threw the—de-headed him. Yeah, one of my—Yeah.

BAK: Wow!

KC: And there were enough guys over there and platoon sergeants who had been around driving over the few years before these new people came in. They knew of the trouble spots, and you don't want to do that because of this or that. They knew to secure their fire extinguishers, which were on the outside because there was always a story about somebody's fire extinguisher come banging down the autobahn. And of course the autobahn, they don't have accidents. They have grease spots. When there's an accident in Germany, there's nothing left to fix and there are only body parts, period. And in Germany, the right of way is the guy on the left who is coming at 180 to 200 miles an hour.

BAK: Wow! And how fast could these army trucks go?

KC: Not very fast. So, they were always in the right lane.

BAK: Right.

KC: But if you were a civilian driver over there, it was very, very dangerous. You could think you were going to pass somebody; you could look in your rear-view mirror, clear three times, pull out, and you had an BMW behind you blinking his lights. It's like, excuse me, I got my foot on the floor and my Mustang here and I'm not going anywhere. And they could hit you if they wanted to because they would've been in the right.

BAK: Wow!

KC: [I was over in Germany about ten years ago as a civilian contractor at Vilseck for a multi-service exercise. And I have never seen, so many semi-trucks—KC clarified later.] There was no problem with anybody coming from behind because you couldn't get through two

lanes of truck traffic, semi traffic.

So, it was a different story returning—

BAK: Right.

KC: —in 2015 or so than it was in 1976, '77, '78. But during that time period, anybody who had a really fast BMW or Mercedes, they could fly as fast, pretty much as fast as they wanted to.

BAK: Wow!

KC: Our drivers [comment redacted] knew safety was a big deal because if they got into trouble safety wise, and it was determined and came out that they were kind of negligent on either taking shortcuts or not doing what they were supposed to, their driving time was going to be cut and none of these drivers wanted to be on station where they were going to find crap duties to do.

BAK: Pick up the cigarette butts.

KC: Our guys were pretty good about wanting to do a good job, wanting to make the company look good and wanting to make their squad and platoon look good, wanting to make their company commander look good. I wasn't aware of how much effort my soldiers did to make me look good until after I left. Looking back on the time that I was there and events, they didn't do anything fattening, illegal or whatever, but I didn't realize that that was an aspect of their excellence.

BAK: So, what do you attribute that to? Just esprit de corps?

KC: Esprit de corps. And they knew all the company, when I came back to take command, they knew that I had come out of WAC basic, that I had gone to transportation basic, that I had come in as a first lieutenant and therefore didn't know as much as perhaps a first lieutenant who'd actually been through second lieutenant would know. They knew that I would ask a question. They also knew that they were responsible for, give her some reasons why. And I found going on with my staff work that you didn't complain. You can go in and complain to the boss and say, this is stupid, it doesn't work, but you better have three solutions that would. And frankly, I learned that from my soldiers.

BAK: Okay, wow!

KC: They didn't say this, you're going to need this later on.

BAK: Right.

KC: But generally when they came and said, this isn't working, we should do this or this or this, and then it would be, I would say, what do you recommend? What do you guys recommend? The people who had been involved with whatever the issue was, what do

you recommend? And generally, we're able to, let's not go out there or let's take a different route. Or they maybe would come back to the truck master with a complaint that such and such location routinely doesn't secure their [loads—KC clarified later.] Well, at that point then our higher headquarters, our group headquarters would contact that facility and say, hey, we keep getting complaints.

And then generally what happened is there were probably complaints from other battalions where there had been a problem there and then they would solve it. But it was those kinds of things. No different than really life out here. But those were the kinds of things that would get dealt with. Finding parts for repairs was also real interesting. Out of my sixty trucks, they always wanted to have, and I don't remember X number of trucks, ready to go. You could only have so many down from maintenance. So, sometimes the truck masters would trade units, pieces from one company to another. Cannibalize from one place to another so that you could—And everybody pretty much helped each other out because once again, those repair parts went to the civilian labor group drivers first.

BAK: Why the civilians?

KC: Because it was Germany, it's their country.

BAK: Okay. So, the Germans gave it, okay. They didn't come from America.

KC: It's their country. [It was just the way it was to foster safe driving by U.S. Army drivers.—KC clarified later.]

BAK: Did you find any like generally pro, neutral or anti-American sentiment in Germany?

KC: At that time that I was there, it was very, very pro. One that was pro because of the policies. But two, we were a major, major, major employer. A lot of our staff members at the battalion headquarters were German civilians. For example, our battalion safety officer was a German female civilian. So, she was the one who was able to sort through, if X happened, she could bounce it against whatever the military law was and if and how it crossed over to German law and what the fix either could or would be. So, that safety officer was there. And so she interacted with the German safety laws and the battalion, the military safety laws. So, there were a lot of German civilians in office work for sure. But also mess support, not so much mail, because one of our companies was primary mail. That's pretty much all they did.

[In fact, that mail company was our backup company if we stood down from training. My company transported nuclear special weapons materiel from Ramstein Air Base to an ordnance storage facility location nearby. We also moved similar materiel back to Ramstein to return to the U.S. for "de-mil" or servicing—KC corrected later.]

BAK: Now. This is some high stakes.

KC: Yeah.

BAK: Yeah. Did you ever have problems with—

KC: No. The only problem we ever had was with the Russians.

BAK: Didn't see that coming. Okay.

KC: And it was only in convoy. And when they moved from Ramstein incoming to ordnance storage or vice versa, generally there was never one truck. There were always at least two trucks. And it wasn't like one was a decoy. They both had loads. So, apparently ordnance people just didn't move stuff unless they had enough to move with two trucks.

The ordnance people provided an escort. [comment redacted] There was what was called a SMLM vehicle. So,viet military liaison mission vehicle. And the Russians were over there checked to see what was moving. And of course there was no GPS, there was no cameras, there was nothing. So, they could all drive around. So, all the Germans, all of the Americans who were there, their families, their kids, their wives, everybody, if you were off duty and you saw a SMLM vehicle [you, the next chance you got to get to a telephone, you would call your company, call somebody in your chain of command and say, I just saw a SMLM vehicle and cite the location—KC corrected later.]

So, they knew they're in the German-Belgian region, they knew where the So,viets were. And all the So,viets were doing was, they're just watching like, gee, let's see where these trucks are going. Well, everybody knows that there's nukes going from Ramstein to ordnance barracks. I mean, so why would you not keep an eye on that?

BAK: Right, yeah.

KC: So, occasionally those would try to break the convoy. Our drivers were told, you don't break convoy. Not even there's a human being there—KC corrected later] You drive over them.

BAK: Wow!

KC: If there's a dog or a chicken or a goat or whatever, you don't stop. Once you get in and you've been given your order, that's it, man. You go, period. And they were told at what speed to go, and speed was based on whatever it was they were hauling. Whatever their mission requirements were. So, occasionally our guys would come in and truck master would call, our first sergeant would call our one of the platoon sergeants and say, "Hey, ma'am, we just want to let you know that number twenty-two had its [bumper grazed by a SMLM vehicle—KS clarified later.]

So,metimes [the sporting rods—KC clarified later] would get bent off or they'd get run into. Well, trust me, the So,viet military, the liaison vehicle, if it bumped one of the trucks, it was going to be in worse shape than my trucks were. They may have had a scrape somewhere, but then at least the driver said, not my fault.

BAK: Right.

KC: But he had plenty of—So, basically it was more those guys worrying about dodging a

convoy and the driver needing to do what he needed to do, which might've been bad. So, whatever the repercussions of that chicken being hit, or somebody being knocked over or another vehicle side swiping or whatever, those were the outcomes from the mission requirement, the collateral damage, if you will.

BAK: Now, did you have to deal with a lot of collateral damage?

KC: No, I really didn't. I think in the year and a half or so that I had command there, maybe it was only maybe three or four times that there was damage done to the trucks. And each time it was in one of those descriptions. Another thing I did before I took command and was a lieutenant in the company, you get the extra duties. So, I did do one report of survey for a truck. In the area we had a signal battalion and I think a quarter master battalion. Military police were in the area, because remember, Kaiserslautern had lots and lots of civilians. They had their own school there, housing areas. So, there was always something going on. So, I was called in to do a report of survey on a two and a half ton, a deuce and a half, that had rolled down a German hill—

BAK: Okay.

KC: —that was owned and used by the signal [battalion—KC added later] folks.

They were out, I don't know, I think they were looking for a place to hang signal lines in prep for a field training exercise or something similar. And this young driver stopped to get his German girlfriend, and she said, "I know a shortcut." And so off they took down one of the German roads and it was too narrow, and he rolled the damn truck. So, fortunately at the time, it was not a big deal to me. But looking back, I don't think, oh, wow, fortunately, neither one of them were hurt.

But they'll send a young lieutenant out to report, take a survey of what happened, who did it, who, what, when, where, and why, and then write it up and turn it in. So, that truly was the only real damage during my time from platoon leader [assignment—KC added later] to leaving command. That was really the only time I ever saw any real damage to a truck. [comment redacted] But I don't remember any damage to our company [comment redacted.]

BAK: Now, the Cold War was definitely high tension. Were you ever worried like; we're going to have to use these nukes?

[The Cold War was a period of geopolitical tension between the United States and the So,viet Union and their respective allies, the Western Bloc and the Eastern Bloc. The term *cold war* is used because there was no large-scale fighting directly between the two superpowers, but they each supported opposing sides in major regional conflicts known as proxy wars. The conflict was based on the ideological and geopolitical struggle for global influence by these two superpowers, following their roles as the Allies of World War II that led to victory against Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan in 1945.]

KC: Yes and no. Mostly no.

BAK: Okay.

KC: But my guys were always asking me, "If we have to go over the border, would you come with us? " And I said, "Yes." And their always answer was, "But ma'am, they've said you won't." [I said,] What do you mean you won't? They said, "They won't let you."[I said,] "What do you mean they won't let me?" [They said,] "Well, you're female. They won't let you go along." [I said,] "Oh, really, I didn't know that."

BAK: [laughs] Your NCOs [non-commissioned officers], they sound great.

KC: And my answer was, "Well, if you don't have a good connection, oh, Willie, Pete. Got it." So, I said, "I will be with you. I may not be much help because you know I haven't fired my service weapon, but I can handle an M16 along with you. So, yes, I'm coming with you." [They said,] "Okay, ma'am we'll go."

BAK: Wow!

KC: That was the world I lived in. Now, I will say I sat through some West Point senior full colonel [discussing] our war plan: "So, if all hell goes—all of the German bread trucks and the beer trucks and all of the business trucks, were going to leave their loads and come to us and we were going to get to employ the German drivers. And I thought, "I'm just a little idiotic female. I'm not speaking up, but there's no way in hell they're going to do this. "

BAK: Right.

KC: And in the end, when I left, they were doing a re-look at that because they realized that wasn't going to happen. The German business drivers, people, guys who were driving for a living on the economy, supporting the German economy, were not ever going to do that. I mean, there it was in the war plans. I saw it written down. And it was like, really?

BAK: Wow!

KC: But if the West Pointer said it, it must happen. But yeah, so we were there during Cold War. And in fact, [shows photograph] this photo right here shows me and the other commanders going to Berlin to drop off pay and letters to our soldiers who had driven ice cream [other cargo—KC corrected later] to the Berlin, to our side of the wall for their spring festival. And the big deal was, oh, we're getting American ice cream. For whatever reason, that was a big deal. So, when we got there to do that, I took a look at the pilot and said, I'm not getting on the damn aircraft.

BAK: Just we.

KC: Because I had partied with the aviator. Yeah, that's the aviator. [shows photograph] But

my second husband, Tom, had command of [a sister company—KC clarified later.] Here it is right here. So, there's me, second husband who had another company, and there was our battalion commander at the time and command sergeant major. So, there were three companies that went.

The drivers were there way past pay time and weren't going to get back until I think after the second pay time. So,, command sergeant major with the briefcase there, all the guys, all of us as commanders had worked together to determine, okay, specialist so-and-so, specialist so-and-so, whoever the drivers were, here's their pay. And I don't remember if they, they took it in cash, that was the way things were done then. But then Jim flew us into the Berlin airport. Of course, we didn't go anywhere. I remember, I think we had maybe had lunch or something there, but it would've been of course on the US Allies side. So, that was kind of my first exposure. While the [Berlin] Wall was there. [extraneous comment redacted.] The Wall was there. I mean, it didn't affect me in the US or Germany. It just, a border is a border is a border. Way beyond your pay grade. [laughs]

[The Berlin Wall was a guarded concrete barrier that encircled West Berlin of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) from 1961 to 1989, separating it from East Berlin and the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Construction of the Berlin Wall was commenced by the government of the GDR on 13 August 1961. It included guard towers placed along large concrete walls, accompanied by a wide area (later known as the "death strip") that contained anti-vehicle trenches, beds of nails and other defenses. The primary intention for the Wall's construction was to prevent East German citizens from fleeing to the West.]

BAK: Yeah. So, I'm assuming someone had firearms when they're—

KC: Yeah, I think they were probably released with firearms. But there was a big American-German festival there put on by the allies. So, all of the Americans on that side of the Wall, remember there were 65,000 of us over there that would've partied each spring and it was a big deal. It was just like the German Christmas markets; they were a big deal. Well, this German-American festival in the spring of each year was a big, big deal.

BAK: What was that? What was going on? What went on in the German—

KC: It was just like a wine fest—

BAK: Okay.

KC: —or a Christmas market.

BAK: Okay.

KC: It was just like a 4th of July, you know how we do 4th of July, everybody does whatever, but everybody's doing it. Well, it was German-American. Everybody does what everybody was doing it. It was all American stuff. And generally all of the ice cream would get in. And I had a bunch of guys taking reefer [refrigerated] vans and that kind of

thing. So, there was that. But also, we had three battalions and the German civilian labor group battalion. Then we had a group headquarters. Then we had a brigade headquarters. The brigade headquarters managed—I don't remember. So,mebody in that chain of command managed the trains, the duty trains that would go from wherever to the Wall. They always provided two first lieutenants. So, one company might say, "Okay. This month, it's yours. This month, it's yours." So, there was always, to keep people from trying to—There was always maybe [somebody trying to escape from East Berlin to the West via the duty train—KC clarified later.]

Generally, it was a duty train to take [people and good to those assigned to Berlin—It was a passenger train. So, the lieutenants—KC clarified later] were really pretty much train commanders.

BAK: Right.

KC: So, it was traveling any cargo or mail, or whatever goods would move back and forth. Because our battalion and my company didn't do it, that wasn't our mission, it was out there, I kind of knew about it but didn't—how it worked or the mechanisms of it, or why or whatever. But with regard to—You asked about the Cold War. The answer is yes. Within my framework, larger framework, we supported and ran the duty trains. I can remember only—

Of course, when we get together for any large brigade social functions, an open house or some kind of a dining in or anything special, every once in a while, somebody, "Oh, yeah. Remember that so-and-so? They were the ones that had the problem with the guy trying to get out on the duty train."

But I think even that kind of thing only happened maybe two or three times at the most during the time period that I was there. So, with regard to Cold War, it was just business as usual. It was whatever the routine was to sustain whatever the policies were that had been put in place.

Nobody talked about it. Nobody said, "That's just really stupid," or "They need to not do it," or "They need to change this." No. You did what you were asked to do, and that was it. It was kind of like, hey, opinions are like assholes. Everybody has one. You shouldn't be interested in mine, and I'm not interested in yours. So, we just, very simply, did what we were required to do.

But looking back on it, I realize that what we were involved with, our battalions and group headquarters, it was just the movement of goods through US Army Europe, which wasn't just Germany, it was Belgium [and Luxembourg—KC added later.] I don't think we did anything in France. Because I never got out of Germany and it was so closed to my little world, I really wasn't too aware of the greater area. You got to remember; I had no clue how the army worked.

BAK: [laughs] You just learned on the job.

KC: My uniform and time in the service was like swallowing from a fire hose.

BAK: Wow! So, you never actually got—You said you never left Germany. You worked eight days a week.

KC: Yeah. I was stationed in Germany and then came back to Fort Eustis again.

BAK: Right, but did you get to do any travel?

KC: Did do traveling. We traveled on the weekend. I did—I would go over to Saarbrucken and Trier on the weekend. In order not to have to go through battalion headquarters to get a pass or a certificate, I would very often travel on my passport. A lot of the officers would do that. "Hey. Let's go to Trier for dinner."

BAK: Would you wear civilian clothes?

KC: Yeah. That'd be in civilian clothes. The only danger there was, as you were going through the border, if somebody hit you from behind and you were in an accident, you didn't have Status of Forces Agreement. You were on your passport. If I'd have had orders, and somebody hit me and then said, "It's your fault." "No. I wasn't. I'm sitting still." But if it required me to go to a German court, I didn't have any army backup.

[A Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) is an agreement between a host country and a foreign nation stationing military forces in that country. SOFAs are often included, along with other types of military agreements, as part of a comprehensive security arrangement. A SOFA does not constitute a security arrangement; it establishes the rights and privileges of foreign personnel present in a host country in support of the larger security arrangement. Under international law a status of forces agreement differs from military occupation.]

BAK: Got it. Interesting.

KC: So, going to Trier, which was maybe, I don't know, half hour; of course, on the freeway would be a lot faster then than it would be now; or to going to Saarbrucken, going there on the weekends, that was kind of a big deal. That, you could do—"Oh, gee. I don't have anything I have to do tomorrow from 1:00 until 7:00." You could get over and back.

That was the only risk that we took. I mean we were safe, but should there have been a legal thing, you wouldn't have had any—They probably would've and could've sorted it out, but that was the risk that you had to take a look at doing.

So, yeah. We did do travel. We went to England. We did have time off. We didn't really do much on the weekend, because when it got to be 3:00 on Friday, we may or may not have an alert.

BAK: Alert?

KC: Readiness test.

BAK: Oh, okay.

KC: You never knew when it was going to happen in your battalion. If it was called by higher headquarters, your battalion may be in the hot seat. So, at three o'clock in the afternoon, when everybody's trying to pretend, they're not army anymore, deal with their family and whatever, an alert would be called. Then it was on the first sergeant and the company commander and the leadership to get everybody back. And that meant stage all the trucks, take every fricking round out of the damn arms room, and count it all.

BAK: Oh, wow! That's a Friday afternoon [unclear].

KC: —and then load it back up. By the time you were done, it was 8:30, 9:00, 10:00, 11:00 at night. It's like—

BAK: How often did that happen?

KC: You never knew.

BAK: Never knew. Okay. Wow!

KC: I would say as often as once a month.

BAK: Wow!

KC: Or once every six weeks.
BAK: So, you couldn't make party night promises.

KC: Your unit leadership had to be very careful and cautious about—Whatever number of people you had, you generally only put a certain small number of them out for the weekend to get a three-day pass. Everybody knew it. The guys all knew it. They were okay with it. It just is what it is. Because I don't want to have to do any more extra than—If first platoon's gone, if I'm second, third platoon, why do I have to do this?

BAK: Right, right.

KC: As a result of that, I probably didn't do as much traveling as I would've, maybe could've. But that was sustainment.

BAK: Did you have any problems, because I hear a lot of stories about how some male soldiers wouldn't salute female commanders?

KC: Never.

BAK: Never?

KC: Never ran across it. Of course, I was in the army when it was a good army. That's all I'm going to say.

BAK: Okay.

KC: At this point in time, I would spend as much time telling somebody not to do it as, during that time, I spent telling somebody to do it.

BAK: So, just a personal responsibility thing.

KC: I know enough to know that we now have an older army. All of the equipment is aged out. It's all been given away. And we would run into places where I'm not saluting you. I saw none of that.

BAK: Interesting. What about—?

KC: None of that.

BAK: What about when you had to tell people who outranked you what to do?

KC: They did it.

BAK: They did it? Okay.

KC: They did with a smile on their face, because "I can't believe she's got the cojones to do it."

BAK: Okay.

KC: Now, I will tell you, the only time I had trouble was when we had a dinner. We being—It was battalion, remember, three battalions, and a battalion of civilian labor group. Civilian labor group hosted a big sit-down fancy meal. They wanted me to come in dress blues. I don't have dress blues. I'm not buying any damn dress blues. In fact, my dress blues are sitting in the museum downtown [in Graham, North Carolina—KC clarified later.]

BAK: Oh, really? Just unworn with the—

KC: Where Gail works. They're sitting in there. So, I had a dress, pretty blue, one shoulder dress, which I wore. I was dancing with the civilian commander. In comes one of my charge of quarters guys. [He said,] "Ma'am, I need to speak to you." I said—So, finished and went over. [He said,] "You have to come get—" I can't remember his name, [He said,] "—from the jail. Come get so-and-so out of jail." I said, "What?"

What happened was, both of my lieutenants were gone. One was on leave, one was on emergency leave, death in the family. And all the three of the platoon sergeants, who were E-6s, were either on other duties or elsewhere.

BAK: Okay.

KC: And that left me.

BAK: Okay.

KC: Oh, ordinarily, it would've been just fine. It wasn't an oversight on my part. It wasn't an oversight on my first sergeant's part. It was just the way it rolled. Actually, I was short two lieutenants anyways.

So, off I went in the Jeep, hiking my dress up, in my heels, and thought, "I'm going to kill that son of a bitch when I get hold of him." So, when I went in, [I said,] "I'm here to pick up specialist so-and-so." [He said,] "Ma'am, did you not understand it has to be an NCO?" I said, "I don't have any NCOs." [unclear] ticked off here, here, here and here. I said, "Well, then the first sergeant is staying there. They sent me. I'm his commander." "But Ma'am, we need—" I said, "I am his commander. Get his ass out here now." I showed them the ID card. It was like, "Okay." But it was like, oh my gosh. All the way back, I hollered at this young kid, "Can't believe you did this." I guess the stories got out. [They said.] "You should have heard the lacing that the ma'am gave—"

There was a lot of that behind-the-scenes stuff that I wasn't aware of until—when the goodbye part was, "Ma'am, did you know about the time," or "Did you know what happened when so-and-so, when you went to do blank blank"? I was like, oh, my god. I had no idea some of this stuff was going on, because I was doing just what I thought was best at the time.

BAK: Right, right. You're just focusing on your job. So, when did Bobby [husband] come in? Is he in Germany or were you back in—

KC: Bobby was in Germany. Bobby had command of the 21st Support Command motor pool. His duty, the mission for his section part that supported 21st Support Command, I think he may have been part of 4th Trans Group. But once again, it'd be all I could do to manage the world I was in, let alone the line diagram for all the other things that were over there for 21st Support Command, which had all kinds of—Let's see. It would have military police, and signal, and all kinds of everything.

Bobby supported the motor pool that drove all the buses for the guys and gals who were going to school, the DoD [Department of Defense] schools. The buses that would drop you off at the commissary, drop you off at the PX, pick you up in the morning to take you to school, bring you back in the evening, Bobby did that and a bunch of other stuff.

In fact, he wanted, wanted out of that unit. I didn't realize that he had applied for to take the company that I had. I didn't find that out until [after being assigned as commander—KC added later.]

BAK: Oh, my!

—after it was all over. While I took on the company, I didn't realize—That was not something I—I wouldn't have done that—[ask for Company command—KC added later.]

The battalion commander—I got called in. I had a bunch of soldiers say, "Ma'am, we hear you're going to be our new commander." I said, "What? That's just not possible.

What are you are talking about?" Yeah, well, they had worked at—They had friends or buddies at headquarters, and they knew what plans were. What I didn't realize was that Colonel Ross, at headquarters, they had watched me be platoon leader, and then headquarters detachment commander, and work in the S1 office and operations, and went, "Hey. Put her back over there."

Well, I was not aware of what was going on above my pay grade. So, I got called in. So, there was the battalion commander, the XO [executive officer], and each of the staff officers. I thought, "Oh, crap. What have I done?" They just sat there and smiled. I thought, "Well, they're not frowning, so I don't know."

Colonel Ross says, "We'd like for you to go back and take command of the 89th, now that Captain Moore is gone." I said, "What?" Just off the cuff, I said, "Sir, if you want me to do this so you can say you had the first female company commander, to have a nice little feather in your hat, the answer is no. Those guys have taught me and have supported me in the time that I've been here. So, if you're looking to be the first guy, first senior officer to have a female commander, I'm not interested in helping you out."

BAK: Wow!

KC: I thought, you didn't really just say that.

BAK: Yet you did.

KC: The answer was, yeah, you did. I can remember Anthony, Tony Arcos, Major Arcos, who did all of the operations, truck movements and operations. Looked over and said, "Tony, she'll be just fine." At that point, I went, "Are you serious, sir?" He said, "Yes, would you like to do that?" I said, "Yeah, sure of course, sir." I said, "If you think I'm—" I said, "This is too big of a deal to screw up." And that's what happened.

BAK: Did you have any mentors, or did you just have to learn on the job?

KC: Oh, no, no. Mentor? Really?

BAK: Okay. All right. It is one of my questions.

KC: No, no. My mentor were my soldiers and my first sergeant. I did not have any officer mentor. I was first out of the slot. I was the second female commander. I was the second female officer when I arrived there. The first one had slept with everything in pants.

BAK: Oh, my. Okay.

KC: And pants were the only thing that was worn. As a result of that—And I knew that. One of my soldiers had said something to me. "Oh, well, I hope you're not going to be like lieutenant so-and-so." I said, "What do you mean?" "Well, you didn't know, ma'am?". "No. How would I know? I just got here."

That's pretty much the way I treated everybody. So, when I found out, I thought, "Oh, geez, okay." So, at that point, I ran by myself, I shopped by myself, I did everything

by myself, everything by myself. I couldn't run around with the officer's wives because they were doing tea or whatever when I was working.

BAK: Wow!

KC: And I couldn't hang out with the guys because, "Oh, she must be sleeping with them."

BAK: It sounds lonely.

KC: And to this day, I have maybe twenty people on my contacts list, and I told you, I still have the tank of gas I had in June.

BAK: You're done with transportation, right?

KC: No. That just tells you I'm still a loner.

BAK: Right. Got it.

KC: Very costly.

BAK: Okay. So, before we leave Germany here, did you—?

KC: Bobby and I ended up running together.

BAK: Oh, okay.

KC: That was because we were both the same height.

BAK: Okay.

KC: And what the company would do—The whole time I had command; they never went to the field. Well, they went to the field in the middle of winter, and we pulled [trucking assignments from the field location—KC added later]—So, you know the guys who managed to get out of the field stayed out to travel around.

Also at the time I came in, it was the battalion commander [directing]:, "Okay, we're going to start doing PT. Each company has to come out for PT." Before that, they kind of did and didn't, because everybody was here, there and gone. But that was a big deal— "And we're going to have a pass and review to give out [driver safety awards—KC added later]. "So, every month, they would just [U.S. Army drill and ceremonies to remind drivers they were still supposed to be in formations and march—KC added later.] The battalion commander wanted a little bit more reminder that you were in the army and not just a truck company kind of thing.

BAK: Spit and polish?

KC: As a result of that, we had to rally out anybody who was there to go for a run. Well, at

that point, Bobby and I were running maybe [several times a week—KC added later]—I would always run at least four to five miles a day.

BAK: Wow!

KC: A couple times, Bobby would come by and say, "You want to go run?" "Yeah, sure. I'll go run." Well, I just went out and ran. Yeah, I ran, but I'll go run again and have company. We'd run and talk.

At one point, I had one of the platoon sergeants said, "Ma'am, we didn't know you ran ten miles a day." I said, "What do you mean? I don't run ten miles a day." "Well, we were just in the gym with Captain Chin." He said, "We know where you guys ran, five miles today (meaning that they knew the running route and how long that was)—KC added later] 'Where'd you run today?'" "So,," he said, "We know where you ran." And I thought, "Well, crap. That's why my legs are sore."

BAK: Oh, my gosh. Ten miles a—I can't even imagine.

KC: So, had I run twice that dayTra.

BAK: Wow! Right.

KC: Twice that. It was no big deal. It just wasn't a big deal.

BAK: Wow!

KC: It was only an hour.

BAK: Okay, only an hour. Okay.

KC: As a result of that, about that time when the company was running, we formed up one time and off we took. And I didn't realize that there was a faction of, let's see if we can run the ma'am into the ground.

BAK: Okay.

KC: So, they ran real fast. I just kept up with them because we were in a unit, and so that's what we did.

But then I realized what they were doing. So, the next time we had a formation, I went and found all the guys who had short legs. I went, "You, you, you and you, in the front, front row." And all the guys who had tried to do the running, "You, you, you and you, at the back."

BAK: Clever. Very clever.

KC: I told the guys in the front, "You keep my pace." So, that's what we did. So, we went out and partway back, I called them all to a halt. Just before that, I let the platoon move

partway forward, and when I got to these back rows, I hollered at them. I said, "You, you, you and you, get out. Run wherever the hell you want. Preferably, run around the formation." So, of course, everybody's running, going, "What are these people running for?"

At that point, I stopped the formation, said, "We're going to run back," so we knew what we're looking at. They can't say, "Look how raggedy they look. Well, of course. They got a female commander."

BAK: Right.

KC: [I said,] "So, we're going to go back in and look strac [military slang meaning a well-organized, well-turned-out soldier], we're going to look good." So, that's what we did.

As a result, Bobby and I somehow ended up—He'd come over— I met him through, I don't know, probably at the O club [officers' club] somewhere. He said, "Let's go run." So, he and I would always—He was really my running partner is how—In fact, we ran together pretty much up until the time that I needed a pacemaker.

BAK: Okay. All right. You're there in Germany for four years, then—

KC: Yeah.

BAK: Then you were—

KC: My husband, Tom, got assigned to Fort Hood or someplace. They were going to assign me to Fort Hood. At that point, things were really not good. The military is not a good place to build relationships.

BAK: Right.

KC: It can be done, but it maybe can't be done more often than it can be done. So, at that point, I said, "I'm not going." He didn't believe me. So, when I got up here [Washington D.C.—KC clarified later], I got divorced when I was at Military Traffic Management Command.

BAK: Was Bobby still in Germany?

KC: Bobby and I, we were pretty close at that point in time.

BAK: Okay. Was he put in—Did he come back to Fort Eustis, or was he still in Germany?

KC: I was at the Military Traffic Management Command, which is right across from the Alexandria Metro and the Hoffman Buildings. Those two buildings, one was enlisted, and one was officer management, in two buildings there.

But Bobby was—He got picked to go back to graduate school, which is operations research systems analysis. He was in a test, first only course for ORSA [Operations Research/Systems Analysis] work. He would come home on the weekend, so

we could run then. That's what it was. [The course was at Fort Lee, Virginia—KC added later.]

I was assigned in my secondary MOS [Military Occupational Specialty: job title] admin type stuff. I was in the combat support service division. I sat on selection boards, because they needed a female officer. There weren't that many at the time. We processed compassionate reassignments and that kind of stuff.

During that time, Bobby was at Fort Lee doing ORSA course. In fact, once they were done, they were never able to recruit another group of guys who were smart enough to take the course, and so they didn't do [another course—KC added later.]

[extraneous conversation with family member deleted]

KC: Yeah. He was doing ORSA stuff at Fort Lee, and I was taking my master's at the time.

BAK: Oh, you got a master's?

KC: Yeah. Picked up a master's in management and organizational development.

BAK: Wow! That was in when you were in Virginia?

KC: Yeah.

BAK: Okay. So, you were there for two years?

KC: Yeah, and then I got out and we had the kids.

BAK: Okay. Anything you want to talk about in your time in Virginia? How did you get from transportation to—

KC: When I got out, I ended up being—literally was a [personnel—KC added later] recruiter for a company called Halifax. Halifax did all of the wiring for Defense Intelligence Agency, when they were putting in secure phone lines and stuff. That was techie stuff at the time. So, we were recruiting, generally it was military signal folks who had done that kind of work to begin with. They were doing that there.

I ended up working there for one of the guys that, when I was assigned to MTMC [Military Traffic Management Command], when he retired, he took over the admin for Halifax. When he found out I was going to get out, he said, "Well, we need a recruiter. Are you interested?" So, I did that for a while, and had the kids, and then I actually went back, and substitute taught for about five years.

BAK: Were you a scary substitute teacher?

KC: No. I loved to substitute. In fact, I had a fifth-grade class that were so much fun that when the lady called me back, I had a dentist appointment, and I rearranged the dentist

appointment so that I could go work with this group of kids.

During the time that I substitute taught for County of Fairfax, I kind of wanted to go back and teach art. But in '76, when I left an art classroom, you had to understand that you could never go back, ever, because all school systems have maybe five or six elementaries, maybe one junior high, maybe one high school. But junior high and high school band teachers, PE teachers, they never leave. Thirty-five years, sixty years.

BAK: Wow!

KC: Elementary school, five schools. You could go to another school system and get in, maybe have five opportunities to get a job. If you were an art teacher, it wasn't going to happen, because our art teacher had been there for fifteen years. And any time money is cut—

BAK: Art goes.

KC: Art [program] goes first. So, when I left, even though it was a fleeting thing, it wasn't something I didn't do with some long hard thinking, because I had no other skills. Four years of college education, K through 12 art certification. I didn't—At that point, I didn't really have graphic arts training to do advertising or any of that kind of thing.

And frankly, I'm not sure, at that point, I don't know where I would've gone with those skills. I don't know what I would've done. There probably would've been something, but I didn't have the kind of skills to do anything other than that. I did, while I was in Wilmington, did go and sit for the Praxis, and did get certified to teach in the state of North Carolina, but as K through 12 art only. [Extraneous comment redacted.]

So, yeah. I substitute taught it when we were there, and then was doing that. By that time, the kids went off to college, and Bobby was doing his thing with a couple of contractors in ORSA work, believe it or not.

BAK: In ORSA?

KC: ORSA, Operations Research/Systems Analysis.

BAK: Okay. That's what he was doing. So, you left, you decided to leave the service, because you wanted to have kids?

KC: Yeah.

BAK: That was the reason?

KC: It was just a benchmark. I had to think long and hard about leaving an art room, had to think long and hard about, do I want to have kids?

BAK: Right.

KC: I've had several people say, "If you stayed in, you probably would've been one of the first

female generals. You were on a fast track. You had had—You'd punched all the tickets, as they say. You had done all the things that would've put you in a position where you would've been qualified for what they would've been looking for general officer."

Now, what I know, I'm very happy to have done exactly what I did, because once you're a general officer, you are no longer your own human being. You are a puppet.

BAK: Puppet? Who holds the strings?

KC: Whoever you want. You think of whoever you want, and they pull the strings.

BAK: Okay.

KC: So, I probably would've gotten a heart attack dart.

BAK: You would've gotten a what?

KC: Heart attack dart.

BAK: Dart. Wow! Okay. That's some high intrigue. Okay.

KC: Yeah.

BAK: Okay. Well then you were—

KC: So,mebody was looking out for me.

BAK: Okay.

KC: It would've been fun, but to butt heads against something you didn't think was right, I could do that at the company level. That wasn't going to happen at the general level.

BAK: Okay. All right. Did you see any changes in the army over the course of the years you were in?

KC: I probably wasn't in long enough to see changes. I think—Now, I feel very strongly that I probably had a really good influence on the people that came through our battalion during the time that I was there, as female. So, I think from '76 when I went in, to the time in '81 when I left, there were more women coming in, and women were starting into leadership. Women were starting to be [assigned to command positions—KC added later.]

I know I was the only female company commander at the time that I was in there, '79, '80. We came back in '81. So, I only had command for about a year and a half or so, maybe two at the most.

But there were very, very few females at the time. So, I would say, if anything, it was an acceptance of females in the army. It had nothing to do with outranking or male/female. It had to do with you're either good or you're not.

BAK: Right. Okay. That seems fair.

KC: Yeah. The positive side of that is what I found. I did have one female lieutenant. Sandy was really, really—She was really good. Was not aware of anything at the time. I remember her saying, "Can I see you in your office?" I said, "Yeah. Sure." She came in and shut the door. She said, "I don't know what to do." I said, "What happened?" She was playing on the softball team, on the female softball team, and two of the gals were going to get married to each other. Sandy didn't know what to do.

I said, "Well, have you been approached?" She said, "Well, yes and no." I said, "From what you have said about the games, you really are an asset to the team." She said, "Well, yeah." I said, "Well, then go play the damn game. Let them know how you feel. They can either take it or not. It's up to you." So, that's what she did.

But at that point, I had no idea there was a female football—or basketball team or baseball. She was playing baseball. I said, "Really? I had no idea that there was intramural sports that were going on."

BAK: This was in Germany?

KC: This was in Germany. This was in Germany. Nor did I have any idea that there was a segment of gay going out there. That's fine. Whatever the hell. But I just was not—I didn't see it. I personally didn't see it. It wasn't because I didn't have—I just didn't see it. In my world, I just simply didn't see it, period.

I mean she came in tears, because she had no idea—It was announced, and I think they had to reschedule a game because of whatever the wedding events were. Sandy was completely—It was a shock. She didn't know what to do. I don't see what the big deal is. Go play and don't worry about it. You're hitting a ball with a piece of wood. What's the big deal. But other than that, I didn't see anything.

But as far as the time that I was in there, I didn't see any changes in the guys. I didn't see any changes with regard to race. Like I said, it was mainly music. I didn't see any— There was full acceptance of everybody, at least in the company that I had.

I've looked back to see, was it because you got kids who were able to get a secret clearance?

BAK: Right.

KC: Would it have been different if you'd have been in some other companies? I think maybe a little, but not enough to really—I'd have to do some really, really heavy duty, years-long research. Looking back, I just don't think so. For the most part, it was everybody did joyfully what they wanted to do. And if they didn't like it, then they finished their enlistment. Didn't re-app, and they got out and went out, did other things. It was really a good time to serve. It was a really good time to serve.

BAK: Did you have to deal with any sexual harassment?

KC: No.

BAK: Either personally or as a commander?

KC: I never ran across anybody who either [had] less rank or more rank than me. I was never approached to date or like Bobby and I did, but we were lateral. But no, I never ran across that. And of course, there were no females, so we didn't have a, "So,mebody raped me last night," in the company because you can't do what you don't have.

BAK: Yeah. I haven't really thought about that as a benefit, but yeah, I guess so.

KC: So, I didn't see it. Not that it didn't go on, but Karen didn't hear about it. It wasn't. They were keeping it quiet. I think it just was so rare that it just didn't circulate into the world, and people didn't gossip. The platoon guys did with each other because there was only twenty of them, and they worked. Everything they did, they did as a unit. So, they all knew what their families were doing, what their kids were doing, what their wives were involved in, that kind of thing.

BAK: So,rry, I'm just laughing at Ranger [dog]. That was the same case in Fort Eustis too?

KC: Yeah, I didn't see too much at Fort Eustis. I know there were some lieutenants who came out of West Point, who had told us, at the end of the Motor Officer Course, they were glad they had run into the three of us girls because they said, "Had we not, we would not have known how to deal with them when we got to our unit." They saw in the Motor Officer Course, I was the shortest one, so I was the only one who could sit up full under the Jeep to drain the brake lines. So, I mean, they saw us pull our own, and we beat the crap out of them a couple of times with volleyball, we were just lucky. As a result of that, a couple of guys said, "We're glad you're here. We probably would've had a hard time. We probably would not have been as accepting."

BAK: Yeah, that's great.

KC: [Comment redacted] Everybody in the Motor Officer Course, it was a fun course, it was hard, it was busy, but there was a good group of people, and we enjoyed each other's company. But the guys did say later on that they were glad they had—I said, "Well, just keep in mind, you've got people that you went to school with that were no fun to be around. You either didn't want to go drinking with them, or they were mean people or whatever. You're going to run into the same thing with the female soldiers and your female officers.

So, just remember, you got to judge them on their own personalities because it may be you come across somebody who's really, really good in your next assignment. You come across somebody who doesn't know their ass from their hole in the head, and not to mention the fact that they're mean to other people.

BAK: Right.

KC: That doesn't mean that everybody is, but because there's so few of us, what are you going to do?" So, I said, "I would just pass that on for your human nature." And they went, "Ah."

BAK: It sounds like you were a good mentor.

KC: Well, I tried where I could, because when I left the art classroom, I didn't go in thinking, "Oh, I can be a good model for it—" I had no clue. I had no clue. The whole thing was water hose. It was trying to drink through a fireman's hose. You were only going to get what you needed.

BAK: Right. What you could. What you could.

KC: And it was going to be forced straight down your throat. Everything else was just going to go. I think looking back on my whole experience, very much, that's what happened. And looking back, I thought, "Oh, man, all these women who are now navy pilots and got shot down in Afghanistan, and this happened to them, sweetie, you wouldn't be there if I hadn't done what I did when I did it, how I did it blindly."

BAK: Right.

KC: The best thing I ever did was get in. The worst thing I ever did was get out.

BAK: Really? Why do you say that?

KC: I have always been sorry that I left.

BAK: Hmm? Because?

KC: I liked it that much.

BAK: You liked it. Okay. But would you have been—

KC: And believed in it.

BAK: —kicked up a few ranks?

KC: Oh, yeah. Yeah. But probably by the time I reached full colonel, I would've thought, "Ah, maybe we've had enough here."

BAK: Okay.

KC: Much anything over colonel is all political.

BAK: Got it.

KC: I mean, in here, really, really, really, really is. You do what you're told. Even though you think taking this course of action is dangerous, immoral, illegal, or fattening, you take the course. You're there to do a job. You aren't there to determine what the job is, in a sense.

So, within your job, you can determine what the job is, but at that higher pay grade—So, it would've been okay, but I wouldn't have the kids. We wouldn't be here. I wouldn't have had the other opportunities that I had to be a recruiter for an engineering company, to be a substitute teacher, to work at a college, to work at LMI in logistics, which had been my background anyways, to participate in a multinational training exercise in Vilseck. So, it's like you can say I wish I hadn't but [am thankful for the opportunities I had—KC added later.]

BAK: Right, okay. What's LMI?

KC: Logistics Management Institute. [A civilian contractor to the army in transportation and logistics—KC added later.]

BAK: Logistics Management Institute. All right. Okay.

KC: They were a very, very large military contractor that provided services to the military, like preparing—Maybe they would send an admin person who had probably retired out of the military and got out like I did, and they would have managed an office. So, all of the reports that needed to be passed out for large meetings, they would've prepped all those and done any reports, just stuff that whoever was on the job really needed an augmentation for. So, it could be that. It could be they would provide people to support the army hospital there in town, the logistics, all the fuel management. I did do that too. I was at Belvoir. I actually helped set up a unit that is no longer in action.

BAK: As a civilian.

KC: —at DLA, at Defense Logistics Agency before we came down here working for Logistics Management Agency as a contractor. They had a contract to set up the JCASO, Joint Contingency Acquisition Support Office. At that time, the Middle East was getting kind of cranked up. It's like first you send in the army, and then you send in the navy. And the navy needs local food, and the army's using local food. So, you've got two contracts for local food, and then you send in the air force, and they need local food, so you have three contracts for local food. So, why don't we put them together, or why don't we talk to each other? What a concept.

BAK: Yeah, I guess it's—

KC: That's what JCASO did. Okay. So, I wrote the personnel descriptions for much of those positions.

BAK: What years were that?

KC: 2004 or '05 [KC corrected later]. That's a complete, complete blank. In fact, last year or maybe two years ago, they just dissolved that. They closed the agency down, but that's what was happening. And I can't think of the large unit that manages all the contracts that were out there [Defense Contracts Management Agency—KC added later]. I was at

Military Traffic Management Command (MTMC) as a federal civilian, and as they started [to merge MSC, AMC, AND MMTC our transportation jobs were absorbed in that DOD (Department of Defense)—KC added later.] over to be with MSC and AMC, they offered me a chance to go upstairs on the 12th floor [Acquisitions Management—KC added later.] That was 9/11.

BAK: Oh, my!

KC: Oh, yeah, I watched it happen from the top. Yeah, sure did.

BAK: Oh, gosh. Wow!

[Section Redacted]

KC: [Shortly after 9/11, I was reassigned to MTMC Contracting; and further assigned to participate in the Army's revamp of their contracting training process. As retiring employees took the contracting process knowledge with them, it left a void in basic contracting skills. The army began to develop a "Contracting 101" course. I participated in the initial course testing held at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. I had written self-paced army correspondence courses, and held teacher certification in the state of Virginia, so I was a good fit for this course development process. This time in history, post 9/11, many areas in the military services were being reviewed—KC added later.]

BAK: Right.

KC: —and that's how they were fixing it. So, I look back and I realized I'm a Libra. September 30, the government and I go down on the same day. So, I either was the front end of something or the tail end of something. I was tail end of the WAC Corps and the front end of contracting being restructured.

BAK: Interesting.

KC: I've written down all those someplace, somewhere, but at seventy-seven, it was really kind of scary when you go back and look at it and think. I'm sure it had to do with me, but it also had to do with the timeframe, 1945 to 2023, and the change in the world, the [beginnings and endings—KC edited later.]

BAK: Everything.

KC: —the state. Very often, you just did your thing. Whatever it was, you just came to interview Karen and went on to the next one. And then you'll see your project maybe morph into something else or be absorbed in something else or change in some way. But looking back on it, it's kind of—it's not anything. It's just been interesting for me to see and understand that you've been parts of various things that have changed. So, when I see these documentaries of these gals who were, "Well, we were in this dog fight or that fight," it's like, "Yeah, sweetie, like I said. I feel your pain.

BAK: Right.

KC: I felt your pain sixty years ago before you feel it." But you can see they're excited with what they're doing. Well, just take the years back, and that was me. So, that's the long of it.

BAK: Are you aware of Evelyn Pat Foote? I know she did—

KC: Yeah. I didn't personally know her. I think I've been introduced to her once, but yeah.

BAK: But the—In Carlisle, the army museum, they're doing an exhibit.

KC: Oh, are they? Oh.

BAK: Yeah. About her.

KC: Good old Carlisle. Yeah. Got friends up there. That's good. That's good to know. That's good to know.

BAK: Is there anything about Fort Eustis that you wanted to mention that we didn't cover?

KC: I really enjoyed being at Fort Eustis. I enjoyed knowing that I was going to be [there two times, once for trans[poration] basic and once for trans[portation] advanced courses—KC added later.] Both those were year-long courses, so I had no problem going back to Fort Eustis for the advanced course. In fact, I really wanted to move there. So, when Bobby and I got—He got assigned there at Fort Lee for—We were both there in Springfield [Virginia]. He went to Fort Lee for a week and came home on the weekends. And I was at Military Traffic Management Command just at the Alexandria Metro. So, when we were there, and I kind of wanted to move back to Fort Eustis area. Well, he really didn't. And we would've always had the tunnel. So, one way or another, you were always going to have to be on one side of the tunnel or the other.

I thought it was kind of cool, but then again, even in the times that I was there for the two schools, I was never there when it was uncool, and I was stuck in the tunnel here. And I thought it was cool because the army, navy, and the air force were there, and I liked being at Little Creek.

BAK: Okay.

KC: And the air force was there. Now it's joint base. Now it's joint base, army at Eustis, and sister base is there in the Tidewater area [of Virginia]. Additionally, I was so stupid. I didn't realize that if you're going to bomb someplace, that's the best place to do it. Then you can take down all the services and one fell swoop.

BAK: Right.

KC: But Bobby always said that [all services were in that—KC clarified later] that stretch between Fort Eustis and going down to Virginia Beach.

The traffic was always [congested—KC added later]—The lanes were always being worked on. So, Eustis, I liked it enough to consider going down there to live, but it really was a navy town and rightfully so. But that was just not something I was aware of because I was there for a year and gone, and I was back.I just thought it was a cool place. Williamsburg was there. It was a lot of history.

BAK: Right.

KC: But once again, I never had any requirement to have a multiservice assignment, so I didn't—

BAK: Have to deal with all the—

KC: Yes, yes.

BAK: Okay. So, you took courses. You taught courses at Fort—

KC: What did I write down there?

BAK: Let's see. [reading from a form] Military Personnel Center, Combat Services Support Division, Military Traffic Management Command, and then Secondary Personnel Management. So, you did both, sat on Selection Boards?

KC: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And they usually try, and the army at the time I was in, I don't know what they do now, but when I was in, they used to put you in your primary. And then at some point, they put you into your secondary. And very often, your secondary maybe—Mine was different, but if I had come out, gone to command and general staff training as a major, you would've gotten courses that would've spoken to both my trans [transportation] and the admin [administration] area. So, that's pretty much what Senior Service School is.

BAK: Okay. What was the hardest thing you had to do physically in the service?

KC: Probably army basic.

BAK: What about emotionally?

KC: I had no emotional problem at all.

BAK: Okay.

KC: None. None. Zero. Not until after I got back and occasionally would hear trucks going down the freeway, and I'm counting the gears, and I went, "He's speeding in the motor pool. No, he's on the freeway, and he's allowed to do that."

BAK: Yes. Wow! That's great.

KC: So, emotionally it's—And hauling the nuclear weapons [and the need to not talk to people—KC added later]. To this day, I am on Facebook, but I don't post anything. I'm seven years' worth of artist trading cards, so I have traded with artists.

BAK: Interesting. I didn't know what that was.

KC: [I have traded ATCs (artist trading cards) with—KC added later] thirty of the fifty US states and in fourteen different countries. [ATCs are] always two and a half by three and a half [inches]. So, I only work on the Facebook with people I interact with on four different trading sites.

BAK: Okay. Interesting.

KC: So, it's an art way I can—Everybody knows when I die, just take everything and torch it because it's just fricking paper.

BAK: Okay. So,mebody might. Okay.

KC: I mean, when we moved down here, what am I going to do with oil paintings that the kids are going to have to dispose of or do something with? I have two paintings on my wall in there that I bought from Alamance Arts from a girl whose family did that, brought paintings, and I took a liking to them.

BAK: That's great.

KC: So, emotionally wise, as a result of my time in service hauling nukes, I've been hacked three time on Facebook. So, now I'm no longer Karen Chin. I'm Karen C. Painter.

BAK: Oh, wow! Okay. Interesting.

KC: And people have asked, "Oh, friend, me." And I have, and occasionally I'll put on there, "If you get a call, if you get something from Karen Chin, it's not me."

BAK: Wow!

KC: In fact, I just answered, there was our friends that we stayed with before the day that we moved down here, I just got a Facebook message from him, "Hey, Karen, how are you doing?" "Oh, great. Geez, it's nice to hear from you." "Oh, you need to try doing this, this, this, and this." And I said, "Oh, no thanks." Well, I heard from him again yesterday and said, "How are you doing?" I thought—So, I sent back a note that said, "You are not who you say you are," and you know what? I haven't heard from him again.

BAK: Wow! Interesting.

KC: I also had an army general contact me on Facebook several times. This has happened to me four times. [Comment redacted.] He doesn't care. Four times, I've had a senior officer outside of country contact me on Facebook. "Saw your profile. What's your background?" Chit-chat and all of a sudden, I'm going, "I see your picture, and I know it's you." But it's like I don't have any trust. I know what's going on. I know what's going on. I know who's doing what to who. I know who's doing what to who and why, and what—

BAK: So, they're trying to get information?

KC: I swear I don't know.

BAK: Oh, you don't know. Okay.

KC: I don't know. And then I don't want to be put in a position where this guy gets shot down, and they go back through his Facebook. [Comment redacted.]

BAK: Right. Better Safe than sorry?

KC: Yeah.

BAK: Okay. What was most rewarding about—?

KC: It's been more emotional trauma for me since I've got out.

BAK: Since the—Interesting.

KC: Since I have gotten out, I have very little trust.

BAK: Hmm. Okay. Where did that start though?

KC: I think from hauling nuclear weapons, yeah.

BAK: Okay. What was the most rewarding thing about your time in the army?

KC: Interacting with the people [with whom I served—KC added later.]

BAK: Yes. Because it sounds pretty great.

KC: The soldiers and the NCOs and the leadership [was the best part of service—KC added later.]

BAK: Did you have any heroes or heroines during that time? People you admired?

KC: Yeah, the two Rosses. Tony Ross is army transportation and general, retired, Dave Whaley —Pretty much, he is the glue that keeps the Transportation Corps together at Fort

Eustis.

BAK: Good for him.

KC: He was my XO [executive officer] at one point, General Dave Whaley. His uniform was in the Transportation Museum. They're still in Tidewater area. So, if anybody in the transportation community dies and we're all dying off at this time, Dave is generally the one. People will say, "Send it to Dave because he's got a list of everybody in the Transportation Corps."

BAK: Is that W-H-A-L-E-Y?

KC: Yes.

BAK: Okay, good guess. What was your impression of the political and military leadership during your time?

KC: The military was fine. I have absolutely no [derogatory things to say about leadership during my 10 years of service—KC added later]—I couldn't have even told you who was president, vice president or health cabinet officers during that time.

BAK: Okay. You were very focused.

KC: Well, yeah. The focus wasn't intentional. It was just the way it happened. I didn't say, "I'm not going to look." So, it wasn't there. There wasn't a continuing assessment of military leadership. I was pleased with until I got to Military Traffic Management Command and worked in my secondary. And Colonel Hatch made me write an information paper on information papers. At that point, I said, "I'm glad I don't have a son, and he's not placed under your command."

BAK: Wow! To him?

KC: No. But people I worked with knew—

BAK: Okay.

KC: [Other officers in that division office—KC added later] —and they never came back to our division because he was not a favorite either. So, I thought it was just me. But as far as leadership goes, actually, that was what caused me to say, "Oh, it might be just time for you to get out. You wanted to have kids anyways." Anytime he would say, "Karen, go do this and do this and do this and take this grid and get this signed and this signed," and then I would go back and gather up all the stuff I needed to make these various stops. And then when I stood up to go, "Where are you going?" And that happened all the time, and I thought, "Son of a bitch, you just told me to leave."

Finally, he did it once too many times to me, and it was winter, and I had on my greens, so a long sleeve, and I had to change the Tampax [tampon]. So, I stuck, the Tampax up my sleeve, and I stood up. He says, "Where are you going?" I said, "I'm going

to change the Tampax. I'll be right back, sir."

BAK: I'm guessing he didn't ask anymore after that.

KC: And all the civilians went—[back to typing fast—KC added later.]

BAK: Wow!

KC: And it was about two weeks after that, I said, "I'm out here."

BAK: Okay.

KC: And I had two generals contact me and say, "You need to come in and talk to us." And they said, "But Karen, they're going to let you wear pearl earrings." I said, "I can wear those to sleep, and then I can wear them on the weekend." At that point, I thought, "If this is what the non-unit world is, I'm done." I'm serious. Ted Hatch got me out of the army.

BAK: Okay.

KC: And it was two generals that I really admired, [unclear], "Are you sure?" And they were doing their job. They asked to make sure. "Are you sure you want—" I said, "No." I said, "I think I've had enough." And I had just enough time having been in DC, and then it was worse as a civilian.

BAK: Okay. Also, during the '70s, there was the Equal Rights Amendment movement. Do you have any thoughts on that?

[The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) is a proposed amendment to the United States Constitution designed to guarantee equal legal rights for all American citizens regardless of sex. Proponents assert it would end legal distinctions between men and women in matters of divorce, property, employment, and other matters. The first version of an ERA was written by Alice Paul and Crystal Eastman and introduced in Congress in December 1923.]

KC: Didn't know it. Didn't know it was passed. Didn't know what was in it. Didn't know how it would affect anybody. Had nothing to do with it. Didn't see it. Wasn't exposed to it. Didn't see anybody affected by it.

BAK: Okay.

KC: Didn't hear anybody talk about it.

BAK: Okay. What are your thoughts about all restrictions for women in combat being removed?

KC: I just remember being on the bus in basic, coming back from firing range, and somebody behind me, and it was school bus type bus. So,mebody said, "Ooh, just wait. We get to be in combat. They won't let us in combat, but we'll never have to have a problem with that." And I turned around, and I said, "You wait. So,meday women will be in combat." 1976, I said that. About three seats back, that whole area roared, just laughed. Everybody wanted to know what we're laughing at. And it was just one of my wise-ass, off-the-side remarks.

BAK: You could have made a lot of money if you bet on that. Right?

KC: Once again, my only comment is if I've got a broken foot, I'm not going to a brain surgeon.

BAK: Okay. I'm not making the connection.

KC: If I need something. If I need to put a screw into something, I'm not going to use a hammer.

BAK: Right. Okay.

KC: In other words, you use the right tool for the job. [So, women and their military skills should be used just as men's skills used where appropriate—KC added later.]

BAK: Okay, got it.

KC: Now, you want to be out there with the [combat gear—KC clarified later] on and you think you can deal with it, be my guest.

BAK: Okay.

KC: I don't know. I haven't changed my opinion of that. Not being in it, being away from it, not seeing people talk about it. But I had some really, really good female mechanics, and they were the right tool for the right job at the right time. She might not have been good at working on Mercedes [luxury German car brand]— [but she could work on an M915 truck—KC added later.]

[Comment redacted]

BAK: Okay.

KC: No, I don't think women need to be there [in combat—KC clarified later.]

I personally really think that a woman on the battlefield, although that acceptance has gotten a lot more. But I think initially it was the fear of them damaging the security because the guys would be too concerned about one of their teammates. And it was that unneeded concern. But then again, you have concern about somebody who's not a good shot or somebody who was just a jerk. So, what's the difference what the cause is? You're still concerned about your mission, so you can look at it that way. So, it's really best job.

BAK: The best person for the job.

KC: The best person for the job. It makes no difference how you got there. If you're there, you got there.

BAK: Okay. Then, did you have any issues readjusting to civilian life?

KC: Yeah.

BAK: You want to talk that?

KC: Not at the minute. Not at the time. But at seventy-seven, I am now.

BAK: Really?

KC: Bad. Yeah. Bad.

BAK: Because?

KC: When I got out, it was Bobby and I, and then we were focused on the kids, and that was a whole new world. And they did this, and they did that, and this happened. And now that I'm older I have found I have no patience for bullshit meetings.

[Comment redacted]

[I only have patience for the meeting at hand and not the personal information about your day at work or the traffic—KC added later.]

But it keeps coming back to I didn't experience that in the military, but the military was different at the time. I have had a harder time. You wouldn't believe it as I've interviewed and talked to you, but I've had people say to me at some recent gatherings, "Why were you leaning against the wall on the edge of [the crowd—KC added later]—" And I will find if I'm in a group, as the meeting event goes on, I'm going to the outer and outer and outer edge, and I'm never around anybody. I even had one lady at one of the concerts in town come up and say, "Would you like to come sit with us? You're always by yourself at these concerts." And I went, "Yeah." And I have a hard time just interacting with people, and the only thing I can think is it stems from the whole time I was company commander.

I did so much by myself, mainly, one, the mission was needed to be quiet. The policy needed to be quiet, and everybody knew what I was doing because I was the only [female—KC clarified later] one around. If you're the odd man out, you're going to get looked at.

BAK: Right.

KC: So, I made sure when I ran, I didn't have really revealing clothes on. I mean, I'm just continually checking that. But also my situational awareness is heightened to the nth and was not aware of it until every time we went on Fort Belvoir, I would say, "Oh, there's a groundhog." It got to be a joke in the car. "Well, mom, how many groundhogs are you going to find this time?" Oh, no, and they never saw them, but I'm talking to them and chit-chatting. Now, I'm not missing anything.

BAK: And that's from being in command, you think, or being on [inaudible]?

KC: And that's a result of being female and being aware of my surroundings.

BAK: Okay, that makes sense.

KC: I've also gotten to the point where I'll recheck what I'm doing. "No, don't get up on a ladder right now. Wait until Bobby comes home." Part of it is just common sense and age, but a lot of it is it's almost built-in, I wouldn't say, psychological muscle memory. You know where the toilet paper is when you go to reach for it. It's the same way with my brain. It automatically goes there and sometimes I go, "Wow, that's interesting, you really did that again."

Yeah. And I think that was picked up during my time in the service and I see that come into play. We lived in the apartments that are exit148 as you pass them, well, of course we were all told to go to our rooms, don't breathe and don't talk to nobody. I went, okay, fine. I'm going to do part of that, but I ain't going to do all of it, so screw you. And as a result, there was a side road, and I would walk up and down that. So, every time I saw semi, I would salute it and count and there were 650 to 700 tractor trailers in an hour I would go, okay, it's one o'clock, you keep counting until it gets to be two.

BAK: Interesting.

KC: And sometimes they would see me and pull the horn. I go, "Yeah." And I would count anybody who had a load. For a while there I wasn't counting bobtails. And I went, no, count the bobtail. He's either going to pick up a load or he's just dropped one off, he counts.

BAK: Wow!

KC: So, it's just stuff like that that comes back in play. And it's not—It's my own personal understanding of what PTSD is because its odd stuff has hit me at odd times and it's not combat because I haven't been there, I haven't experienced it. But as PTSD hits guys and something triggers it, I understand the trigger, I don't understand their reaction because their experiences are different. But I understand triggering and the smell of diesel fuel, sometimes the smell it's like you're automatically looking for somebody or something, it's like they aren't there because they aren't there.

[Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a mental and behavioral disorder that can

develop because of exposure to a traumatic event, such as sexual assault, warfare, traffic collisions, child abuse, domestic violence or other threats on a person's life.]

BAK: Right.

KC: So, it's stuff over that military time that has come back that I wasn't even aware of that I had accumulated until it gets tapped.

BAK: Interesting.

KC: It's okay. That's what makes you, you and me, me. So, no, I don't remember any hero. I don't remember anybody doing anything heroic or saving the day either physically, personally, or with an operation or doing something with a truck. I can't think of anything that was really outstanding. There were a couple of truck rodeos that I've watched people back up a truck between two crystal glasses—Things like that, but not really—Very skilled.

BAK: Right.

KC: But I can't think of anything that I have experienced that would be hero or male or female.

BAK: Okay. Well, how has your life been different because of your time in the military?

KC: I just told you.

BAK: Okay. I just did—

KC: Told you the whole interview.
BAK: Yeah, I found that an odd question.

KC: It's like if I'm in a group I—That's why Bobby said good. I thought, great, don't have to mess with that. I can just kind of smile and nod, I got really nothing to say here.

BAK: Got it. Were your children in the military? Are there children?

KC: No, no. Very interesting though our daughter was in band, and she tried out for drum major. And when we asked her, she said, "Well mom, if you can march troops, so can I."

BAK: Wow!

KC: I didn't see that coming. And it wasn't anything she had ever, or the kids had ever asked me about. Our son when he was at Salisbury University, wanted to go into the air force—He was kind of interested in air force and we said, "That's fine, go for it." But he had to drive all the way to Dover, Delaware for weekends. And they had been in—A couple cars

broke down and his truck broke down and his grades were going down. And finally he just physically—We couldn't do it. And he said what really got him was they were standing in formation and the gal in front of him passed out and it was like February, and it was like zero degrees or whatever. And it was a black gal. He said, "I knew her, and her face was a different color—Her skin was a different color." They were in T-shirts [in the winter—KC added later]. So, he saw the two lieutenants overseeing this group.

And he had heard my comments on good and bad, occasionally they would ask me what the stories are, and I would tell them a couple of the ones that I had mentioned. And Robby broke formation and helped her. And it was a good thing he did because they had to call an emergency. She was in bad shape. [He gave up ROTC—KC added later.]

BAK: Oh, gosh.

KC: This was probably six, eight years ago. And I told him, I said, "It's like anything else, you're going to have good leaders and you're going to have bad leaders. You're going to have people that will toe the line to the point where you're going to die and that's just the way it is. And you're going to have other people who will toe the line so far, but then they won't because safety or compassion or whatever." But I said, "Yes, you saw leadership in action in a classic leadership box, but you're going to run into that any place you go." He dropped out of the ROTC program.

[Comment redacted]

BAK: And he agreed eventually.

KC: And I said, "I know you're getting your persistence from your mom and dad, and I honor that, but I certainly didn't have to do anything like this. You just need to know that I think you're going above and beyond. But it is your decision." [He and another student had to drive from Maryland to Dover, Delaware for ROTC. This travel proved to be too dangerous and pulled too much time from their college classes so they both dropped out of ROTC—KC added later.]

[Comment redacted]

BAK: Okay. Would you—?

KC: So, that's as far as the kids go in the military, those are the two things, and Allison did very, very well as a drum major, very well. They didn't win the drum major competition because the drum majors that won were all the same height. And she was short, and the other drum major was tall, because she [Allison] got her short parents, Chinese and me. So, there was a big difference between—But it was fun to watch them because there was such a difference. But the two of them always claimed that that's why they didn't do well was because they weren't homogenous enough in size.

BAK: Interesting.

KC: Yeah. That's their attachment to the services. Now, they both—I will say they both will call on Veterans Day or Memorial Day or whenever, and they'll always say, we're proud that you had served and all.

BAK: That's nice.

KC: I think it kind of gave them bragging rights here and there along the way. And the fact that they honor us that way works for me.

BAK: Right. Would you recommend to a young woman, if she wanted to have some advice about joining the army today, what would you advise her?

KC: I would discourage her.

BAK: Because? No comment?

KC: Take a look at—I would have to discourage her. I was in at a good time. I'm a three-time fossil, WAC Corps doesn't exist anymore, Transportation Corps doesn't exist anymore, peace time doesn't exist anymore. I'm a three-time fossil. I could not in good conscience—I could not sleep at night if I told young woman, "Oh, that'd be a great opportunity." No.

BAK: Because of—?

KC: The personal risks are too great. The personal risks now, no longer are worth taking.

BAK: Because of being deployed or other issues? Or just—?

KC: You know the other issues.

BAK: Yeah.

KC: I absolutely could not.

BAK: Okay.

KC: Knowing how good [it was in 1978-1981—KC added later]. Right now, I wouldn't even travel. I could not return to some of the places I've visited because it would break my heart [it would have changed so much—KC added later]. Now if you know something's going to hurt you, you don't do it, you don't put your hand on the burner on a stove because you know what's going to happen. I could not travel to Rome or Paris. Bobby just worked right down the street; he was there in Belgium headquarters. We would take the train into Paris and mess around and take it back in the afternoon today. There is no way I could go back to Paris and enjoy it. There is no way. I would not have that memory ruined by what I would see there today. For that same reason, transfer that description to why I would not encourage a young woman to go into the service today.

BAK: Okay.

KC: Or they can go, and not to say there wouldn't be good experiences that along that path.

BAK: Okay. What does the word patriotism mean to you?

KC: I identify that with my time in the service, supporting your country however you personally can do that. Patriotism is supporting your country.

BAK: Okay.

KC: And everybody's opportunity is going to be different based on their skills and their environment, yeah.

BAK: Is there something you would want a civilian to know or understand about what it's like to serve in the military that they might not understand or appreciate?

KC: Yeah, that the leadership and the depth of comradery is unlike anything else you'd ever experienced.

BAK: Okay. Those are the end of my questions, is there anything that you wanted to add that we didn't cover?

KC: No.

BAK: Okay. All right, well thank you very much. I am going—This is the official end of the interview.

[End of Interview]